

For Immediate Release
May 6, 2008
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(Washington, D.C.) - Congressman Albio Sires (D-NJ) sponsored a resolution, which passed the House of Representatives on May 6, 2008, honoring Mr. Dith Pran who was a survivor of the Cambodian genocide and life-long human rights advocate. On March 30, 2008, Mr. Dith, a photojournalist for the New York Times and resident of Woodbridge, NJ, passed away at the age of 65.

"He was a resident of my district, and after fleeing Cambodia in 1979, he devoted his life to speaking out against genocide and helping to find justice for all victims of genocide through his advocacy," said Congressman Sires.

In the early 1970's Mr. Dith was hired as a guide and interpreter by Syndey H. Schanberg of the New York Times. The friendship and partnership that developed between the two became the basis for the 1984 film, "The Killing Fields", which helped bring to light the brutality perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge from 1975 to 1979 under Pol Pot.

In 1985, Mr. Dith became a U.S. citizen and a goodwill ambassador for the United Nations High Commissioner for the Refugees, and in 1994 he worked with the former Senator Charles Robb to help pass the Cambodian Genocide Justice Act establishing an Office of Cambodian Genocide Investigations at the State Department.

"This resolution is to recognize the strength and courage of an ordinary man that lived an extraordinary life," said Congressman Sires. "And, to honor Mr. Dith's commitment to raising awareness about the atrocities that took place under the Khmer Rouge, so the world would never forget."

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